



Braunston Historic Narrow Boat Rally..... continues to push the old boats out

*Adamant
Admiral
Aldgate
April Squire
Atlantic
Aquila
Badger
Barrow
Battersea
Bideford
Bletchley
Bream (stern)
Brighton
Cassiopeia
Cedar
Cepheus
Chertsey
Clover
Columbia
Corona
Cyprus
Dodona
Dorado
Dove
Eileen
Emerald
Fenny
Flamingo
Forward
France
Gerald
Gorse
Gosty Hill
Holland
Ibex
Joseph
Kestrel
Kimberley
Laplander
Laurel
Ling
Lynx (GU)
Madeley
Marcellus
Marquis
Monarch*

Tim Coghlan writes:

81 historic narrow boats attended the recent 13th Braunston Historic Narrow Boat Rally. An improvement on last year's 63, despite the growing popularity of similar events around the waterways: in particular the new Manchester based Lymm Historic Transport Day, which was held over the same weekend.

David Blagrove, Chairman of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum, Stoke Bruerne, emailed to say: 'Once again Braunston has hosted the main event of the waterways year, so far as I am concerned. Boat Shows, rallies, events etc. are all very well, but the Braunston Show is the one that gets closest to the heart of what it is all about'.

The Rally was formally opened by the Canal & River Trust CEO, Richard Parry aboard the last surviving steam narrow boat **President**. Accompanying him was C&RT Chairman Tony Hales steering the butty **Northolt**. Together they steered the pair of boats from the Grand Union Canal into the Marina. As they passed under its famous 1834 Horseley Ironworks Bridge, Richard



Photo: Tim Coghlan

Richard Parry having just declared the event open, continues through the marina on *President*

Parry declared the 2015 Braunston Historic Narrow Boat Rally 'Open!' Their entry was fanfares by Daventry Brass - back by popular demand - and a fine peal of bells from All Saints Church, Braunston, the Cathedral of the Canals.



Photo: Towpath Talk

Another plaque was unveiled by Julia Long, National Officer, Unite the Union, to commemorate the 1923 Braunston Boatmen's Strike, when between fifty and sixty striking boat families gathered at Braunston. The strike, to fight the wage cuts and for the right to join a union, was to last for

An hour prior to the formal opening, Timothy West and his wife Prunella Scales unveiled a plaque to commemorate the Braunston years 1946-51 of working boatman George Smith and his then wife Sonia Rolt. See left. They then took part in the parade of boats on Sonia Rolt's wartime narrow boat **Phobos**.



fourteen weeks. It was one of the first disputes anywhere to involve the recently created Transport and General Workers Union. The T&GWU would go on to become the world's biggest trades union. Today the T&GWU forms part of Unite the Union.

- No 108 (Dist No 4)*
- Northolt*
- Nutfield*
- Nuneaton*
- Otter*
- Owl*
- Oxford No 1*
- Pacific*
- Paddington*
- Panther*
- Pelican*
- Phobos*
- President*
- Purton*
- Raymond*
- Renfrew*
- Roger*
- Russia*
- Sculptor*
- Sextans*
- Sharpness*
- Sickle*
- Slough (Deimos)*
- Southern Cross*
- Stanton*
- Star*
- Tardebigge*
- The North*
- Thor*
- Towcester*
- Vesta*
- Victoria*
- Vulcan*
- Whitby*
- White Heather*



Photo: Tim Coghlan

This year's
NURSER
BEST IN
SHOW

award as voted by the historic narrow boat owners, was won by the coal boat **Southern Cross**, which was last year's runner-up. It is owned and immaculately



Photo: Mike Harrison

maintained by Ryan Dimmock, who will receive the traditionally painted Buckby can to keep for the year, plus £250 in Midland Chandlers gift vouchers to spend on his boat's ongoing maintenance - generously donated by Midland Chandlers. The award was presented by David Blagrove and received on Ryan Dimmock's behalf by former working boatwoman Alice Lapworth. See left.



Photo: Mike Harrison

Ryan Dimmock had already set off on a coal run to the Wolverhampton area by the time the presentation was made in the bar on Sunday lunchtime. This year's runner-up was David Ray with **Ibex**. See left.

As the event has grown over the years, changes in the organisation have been needed. This year there were 14 volunteer harbour masters to manage the moorings and the parades. One of these, John Boswell, was a working boatman in his boyhood in the 1950s, and knew some

of the boats in their working days. He was interviewed before the Rally by Radio Northampton about his memories of those times. The stewards have much reduced the good-humoured chaos traditionally associated with those parades. Head Harbour Master Graham Scothern said, 'We now get the morning parade back in time for lunch, and the afternoon in time for tea, which means the boaters can all meet up for a natter in the beer tent and on their boats.'



Photo: Tim Coghlan



Badger takes the turn into the marina

The Rally also had invaluable help from the Canal & River Trust, in many ways, including closing the visitor moorings on the parade route, and making them available for the historic narrow boats.

All profits, which exceeded £6,000, were donated as usual, to canal causes. The main recipient was the Friends of President which received £2,000. A number of other donations were made to canal societies attending the Rally, including £1,000 to The Friends of The National Waterways Museum, Stoke Bruerne, whose narrow boat *Sculptor* had recently undergone major restoration.

Plans are in hand for next year's event to be held 25-26 June. The theme for next year will be the approximate 80th anniversary of the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company's fleet, largely built



Photo: Harry Arnold

The Club received a cheque for £200.



Photo: Mike Harrison

between 1935 and 1937 - so 2016 is appropriate. Some 180 boats were built in those years, and a substantial number survive. Over the years some 50 have attended our rallies. So hopefully next year will see a spectacular turnout.

It was good to see Emerald here, another first time visitor to this event. See left.

Last time I saw this boat she was on the dock at Langley Mill where she was undergoing very major surgery. I have some interesting pics of her skeletal ribs!! Val